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USSR: Gorbachev Assassination Attempt Rumored

Sources of the US Embassy in Moscow say that disgruntled party members tried to assassinate the General Secretary last week either in Moscow or while he was vacationing in Stavropol. Similar rumors are circulating in Budapest. Gorbachev appeared healthy in films of his visit to Stavropol, but security was unusually heavy.

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Comment: There is no evidence to confirm rumors of an attempt on Gorbachev's life, but his political style and efforts to shake up the bureaucracy make him more vulnerable than any other recent Soviet leader. His "walkabouts" expose him to large crowds much more frequently than his predecessors were exposed, and they make security precautions more difficult. In addition, his assault on entrenched political machines and the arrests of corrupt officials have angered the middle reaches of the bureaucracy. Evidently some of Gorbachev's key associates are now targets as well. According to sources of the Embassy, Moscow party boss Yel'tsin said there had been threats against him and his family because of his purge of the city's party apparatus. Reportedly, there also were two attempted assassinations of Minister of Interior Vlasov in 1985 and 1986 when he served as First Secretary of Rostov Oblast.

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USSR-LATIN AMERICA: Gorbachev Reportedly Plans Trip

several South American press accounts, indicates that General Secretary Gorbachev is considering a visit to Latin America in the first half of 1987. Although the itinerary remains open, Argentina, Mexico, and Cuba are said to be high on Gorbachev's list, followed by Peru, Uruguay, and Brazil. The Soviets are reportedly weighing the merits of a stop in Nicaragua against the risk of adverse reaction in the US. Several senior Latin American officials, including the Foreign Ministers of Uruguay, Brazil, and Argentina, have visited Moscow this year; President Alfonsin of Argentina will travel to the USSR early next month. Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze will visit Mexico briefly on his return from the UN General Assembly session in New York and, according to the Argentine press, will visit Buenos Aires in January.

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Comment: Soviet diplomatic activity in Latin America has intensified under Gorbachev. Moscow wants to expand economic relations with the region, but Gorbachev also hopes that increased Soviet activity offers new opportunities in the global competition with the US.

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Assassination Attempts on Soviet Leaders

Since 1969

there have been a number of attempted assassinations of high-level Soviet officials, including two against Brezhnev. Many of these attempts were directed against officials in non-Slavic republics and may have been motivated by anti-Russian nationalist sentiment:

Official	Number of Attempts	Year
General Secretary Brezhnev	2	1969, 1977
Estonian First Secretary	3	1979
Georgian First Secretary	2	1973, 1976
Latvian First Secretary	2	1977
Lithuanian First Secretary	1	1976
Minister of Internal Affairs in Azerbaijan	1	1978
Kirgiz Prime Minister	1	1980
Rostov First Secretary	2	1985, 1986

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25 September 1986

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